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JAN 30 2006

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In re Application of :
Avi Ashkenazi et al : DECISION ON PETITION
Serial No.: 09/941,992 :
Filed: 21 August 2001 :
Attorney Docket No.: 39780-2730P1C1 :

:

This letter is in response to the Petition under 37 C.F.R. 1.181, filed 12 December 2005 requesting (1) that the rejections containing the six new references which have been used by the examiner in the Examiner's Answer be designated as new grounds of rejection; (2) that the examiner provide a corrected Examiner's Answer which identifies the rejections as new grounds of rejection; and (3) that prosecution be reopened because of these new grounds of rejection.

(Applicants should note that in their petition they have indicated this application as that of "Kevin P. Baker et al." In all previous correspondence with the Office, applicants have identified the application as that of Avi Ashkenazi et al, the first named inventor. This Decision on Petition continues to correctly identify the application as that of Avi Ashkenazi et al.)

BACKGROUND

On 07 July 2004 applicants, following issuance of a Final Office action, filed a Request for Continued Examination. The examiner reopened prosecution and mailed to applicants a first action FINAL rejection on 14 September 2004. Applicants filed a Notice of Appeal on 12 January 2005 and an Appeal Brief on 27 July 2005. The examiner mailed to applicants an Examiner's Answer on 12 October 2005. Applicants filed a Reply Brief on 12 December 2005 along with a request for an Oral Hearing and this petition.

DISCUSSION

In the Examiner's Answer the examiner relied extensively on six new references in order to support the lack of utility and lack of enablement rejections set forth in the Final Office action. These new references are:

Hittelman, 2001, Ann NY Acad. Sci. 952: 1- 12.
LaBaer, 2003, Nature Biotechnology 21: 976 - 977.
Chen et al., 2002, Molecular and Cellular Proteomics 1 : 304 - 313.
Gygi et al., 1999, Mol. Cell. Biol. 19 : 1720 - 1730.
Lian et al., 2001, Blood 98 : 513 - 524.
Fessler et al., 2002, J. Biol. Chem. 277 : 31291 - 31302.

The statutory basis of the rejections (35 U.S.C. 101 and 112, first paragraph) in the Examiner's Answer did not change from the FINAL office action mailed to applicants on 14 September 2004. However, it is clear that the examiner used the additional six new references to reinforce these rejections and rebut more thoroughly applicants' arguments. While the applicants have responded to these new arguments and new references raised by the examiner in the Examiner's Answer in their Reply Brief, they argue that they have been placed at a disadvantage because they are limited in their ability to present substantive evidence of their own in response to these new references and arguments without reopening of prosecution being granted.

Applicants' points of argument are well taken and will be accommodated accordingly

DECISION

For the above reasons, the petition under 37 C.F.R. 1.181 requesting (1) that the rejections containing the six new references which have been used in the Examiner's Answer be designated as new grounds of rejection; (2) that the Examiner provide a corrected Examiner's Answer which identifies the rejections as new grounds of rejections; and (3) that the FINALITY be withdrawn and that prosecution be reopened because of these new grounds of rejection are **GRANTED-IN-PART**.

Applicants' first request that the rejections in the Examiner's Answer be designated "new grounds of rejection" is **GRANTED**.

Applicants' second request has been effectively granted by this Decision on Petition designating the rejections in the Examiner's Answer to be "new grounds of rejection." The further request for the corrected Examiner's Answer is deemed moot in view of the Decision and therefore, **DISMISSED**.

Applicants' third request to have the FINALITY of the application withdrawn and prosecution reopened is **GRANTED** as this is a proper request under the Rules of Prosecution when a new ground of rejection is advanced in an Examiner's Answer. (Alternatively, applicants may rely solely on their Reply Brief and proceed to the Board.)

In view of applicants' expressed limited ability to present new evidence, as noted above, applicants are given TWO MONTHS from the mailing date of this Decision within which to submit any additional arguments, exhibits, affidavits or other evidence which they consider necessary in order to rebut the examiner's new grounds of rejection set forth in the Examiner's Answer. Failure to make any submission will be taken as applicants' agreement to rely solely on the already submitted Reply Brief

This application is being returned to the examiner for consideration of the Reply Brief which will be treated as a reply to a new "Non-Final" rejection set forth in the Examiner's Answer and further action not inconsistent with this decision.

Applicants have been charged a fee of \$130.00 for this petition. However, since there should be no charge for this petition, this \$130.00 will be credited to applicants' Deposit Account No. 08-1641, as directed.

Should there be any questions regarding this decision, please contact Special Program Examiner, William R. Dixon, Jr. by letter addressed to Director, TC 1600, at the address listed above, or by telephone at 571-272-0519 or by facsimile sent to the general Office facsimile number, 571-273-8300.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "George C. Elliott".

George C. Elliott
Director, Technology Center 1600